



NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

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The Honorable Beth Bye
The Honorable Ezequiel Santiago
Co-Chairs, Subcommittee on Conservation and Development

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Santiago and members of the appropriations committee:

My name is Cathy Edwards, and I am Executive Director of the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA). I write to you today to request that you restore funding for the arts in the State of Connecticut budget. The creative economy and the non-profit arts sector is a powerful engine for growth and community vitality. Together, artists and cultural non-profits generate jobs, revenue and quality of life. Investment in the cultural sector leads to thriving communities and demonstrable economic impact.

For example, the International Festival of Arts & Ideas in New Haven CT at its 2013 event generated an economic impact of \$34.3 million, according to an Economic Impact Study conducted by Quinnipiac University. The Festival's 170 events attracted 138,985 attendees. Of the Festival's events, 85% of those events were free to the public. This success demonstrates an unparalleled return on investment. The arts and culture sector have demonstrated that they are a steady, reliable industry, less subject to the cyclical ups and downs than other New England businesses.

The arts play a demonstrated role in attracting and retaining young, creative, innovative professionals, and in promoting a sense of place in which families and people from all backgrounds have a stake in building strong communities. The arts enable all citizens of Connecticut to share in the creative promise of America at its best.

According to *New England's Creative Economy: Non-Profit Sector Impact Study* (2011) published by NEFA, the spending of over 18,000 non-profit cultural organizations in New England amounted to nearly \$3.7 billion, and they provided jobs for over 53,000 people. By comparison, that spending total is fully \$1 billion greater than the gross product of the region's entire paper manufacturing industry and nearly as large as the gross product of the region's information and data processing industry. It is in the interest of our state governments to invest in the creative sector to ensure its success.

I am grateful to the Committee for the work that you do, and I urge the Committee and the General Assembly to restore funding for the arts in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Cathy Edwards
Executive Director